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INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Attorney General
and Ministry responsible for Multiculturalism

GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES MISCELLANEOUS STATUTES AMENDMENT

VICTORIA – Bill 12, the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2007, was introduced today and affects the following provincial statutes:

- Engineers and Geoscientists Act – The Engineers and Geoscientists Act establishes the governing body for these professions. This set of amendments will strengthen public protection, improve discipline and enforcement processes and modernize, clarify and streamline the legislation.
- Architects Act and Architects (Landscape) Act – These two acts are being updated to reflect the new name of the University of B.C.'s School of Architecture, which now includes landscape architecture. The new School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture is part of the Faculty of Applied Science.
- Music Teachers (Registered) Act – The Music Teachers (Registered) Act is no longer necessary, as Part 10 of the Society Act offers occupational associations occupational title protection. The association will reincorporate as a society, reducing the regulatory burden on the association and providing access to the courts to deter unauthorized use of the registered music teacher designation.
- New Relationship Trust Act – The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is proposing changes to the New Relationship Trust Act to provide the organizations making appointments more time to recruit the best possible candidates. The amendment would also validate current appointments to the board of directors until Nov. 30, 2008.
- Child Care Subsidy Act – This amendment further strengthens the subsidy program that assists eligible B.C. families with child care expenses. The amendment will modernize rules for sharing and verifying information as it will now allow government to look into unsolicited third party tips if they relate to a person's eligibility for a subsidy. Currently, the act only provides authority to verify information provided by the person applying for or receiving the subsidy.
- Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act – The Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act, in relation to the person with disabilities designation, is amended by moving the definition of "health professional" from the act to the regulations and renaming it as "prescribed professional." This will bring flexibility to the list of approved professionals without requiring legislative change.
- Employment and Assistance Act – The Chair of Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is given the discretion to appoint appeal panels of one, two or three members. This affords flexibility to convene panels in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- Parole Act – The Parole Act is being repealed and responsibility for granting and supervising parole is being transferred to the National Parole Board and the Correctional Service of Canada as announced in July 2006. Parole is a federal responsibility, and B.C. was one of only three provinces with its own parole board. The decision to dissolve the B.C. Parole Board was made in response to declining numbers of inmates seeking parole and the opportunity to redeploy resources to programs that better prepare offenders to safely integrate into the community after release. National parole criteria are more restrictive and the transfer of responsibility may keep some offenders off the streets longer, thereby enhancing public safety.

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- Police Act – Amendments to the Police Act revise the funding formula for policing in small communities. The purpose of the legislation is to ensure fair and equitable taxation for British Columbians. Under the new program, small communities and rural areas will pay less than 50 per cent of the provincewide cost to police them and will be entitled to traffic fine revenue from the Province to help offset those costs. Further, property taxes for rural areas will decrease $.10 per thousand of assessment. This legislation will have a retroactive effect to ensure that it applies throughout the 2007 taxation year.
- Petroleum and Natural Gas Act – An amendment to the Petroleum and Natural Gas Act will allow initial lease-holders of underground oil and gas rights to retain only the rights within any zone or zones in which oil or gas is found, but not the rights to any other zones. Shallower and deeper zones will be made available for others to explore and develop, increasing revenue to the Province. This change will apply only on a go-forward basis and will not affect existing leases.
- Mineral Tenure Act and the Coal Act – Amendments will afford private property owners new notice provisions before anyone can enter their land. Amendments to the Mineral Tenure Act add to the streamlining of the mineral title registry brought about by the implementation of the Mineral Titles Online registry in 2005. Two amendments provide for greater security of title by confirming mapped position of claims, while other amendments clarify intent of the current legislation. The Coal Act and the Mineral Tenure Act provide for the administration of the Province's coal and mineral rights

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